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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KWMN](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [PHUM](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY: ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

REF: A. STATE 104889
[1](#)B. ANKARA 2066

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: To respond to the Department's call for action in recognition of November 25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the United Nations' "16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence" (ref A), Embassy Ankara:

- engaged with a diverse array of civil society groups;
- reported on the current state of women's rights in Turkey (ref B);
- conducted a clothing drive;
- hosted a digital video conference that featured the President of the National Network to End Domestic Violence; and
- posted summaries of these activities on the Embassy Ankara website. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) Throughout November we met with a wide array of human rights and women's rights organizations in Ankara to assess the current state of affairs on women's rights and domestic violence in Turkey. During the approximately 15 meetings, we listened to evaluations of the current problems in Turkey, offered encouragement and advice, and discussed specific ideas for future cooperation. We summarized our findings from these meetings in ref B.

[1](#)3. (U) Clothing Drive: We held a three-week donation drive during November to collect clothes for the Women's Association Shelter in the southeastern city of Van. This shelter provides temporary housing, food, and job training assistance to local victims of domestic violence, as well as to hundreds of Iranian and Afghani women refugees, many of whom fled their home countries due to domestic violence or forced marriage. Due to an unexpected recent influx of over 250 refugees from Afghanistan, the shelter was in urgent need of blankets, winter clothes, and house wares. We gathered 50 boxes of clothes, shoes, blankets, sheets, toys, and housewares, including 25 new blankets donated by the Embassy Spouse Network. The hundreds of women the shelter services will benefit from the donations.

[1](#)4. (U) Digital Video Conference: Working with the Office of International Women's Issues, we hosted a December 1 DVC on domestic violence, featuring keynote speaker Sue Else, President of the National Network to End Domestic Violence, Ruth E. Bennett (G/IWI), and Laura Carey (DRL) also participated. Addressing an audience of twelve Turkish civil society activists, Else shared her experiences and discussed best practices and strategies for combating domestic violence. Participants then discussed a variety of topics, including: victim services, domestic violence training, funding, and media engagement. The audience noted similarities between problems and methods used to combat domestic violence in Turkey and the U.S. The DVC generated fruitful ideas and discussion, and we hope it will serve as a starting point for further cooperation, both with the embassy and among various Turkish civil society organizations who heretofore have not had occasion to come together.

15. (U) Website: We posted summarizes of these outreach activities on the embassy website:
<http://turkey.usembassy.gov/>.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Turkey>

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